

## Detained but not Defeated

Psalm 56: 1-13

Our text today is yet again a psalm of David. This particular psalm was written during a crucial and vulnerable time in David's life. Following the encounter with Doeg in Nob, fearing for his life from the search of King Saul, David and his men made their way to Gath, the capital city of the Philistines. This is recorded in [1 Samuel 21](#), where David pretended to be mad before the king and the people. Some scholars contend that David was likely apprehended by the Philistines and put in prison due to his notoriety as the giant slayer. They believe this psalm was written as David pondered being captured by the Philistines, crying out for God to deliver him from his enemies.

Regardless of the setting, David is clearly in a desperate situation, greatly needing the Lord to intervene on his behalf. While our situations are quite different, I am sure we all can relate to the uncertainty David felt, and his need for deliverance. We all encounter situations that are beyond our ability to handle. No doubt, had it not been for the providential hand of God, we would not have made it this far. Like David, we can always depend on the Lord in our time of need.

As we discuss the [details](#) regarding David's situation, I want to consider the thought: [Detained but not Defeated](#).

**I. A Prayer in Desperation (1-4)** – David began this psalm by recording the desperation he felt as he prayed unto the Lord. We discover:

**A. David's Plea (1a)** – [Be merciful unto me, O God](#). Having been forced once again to flee from Saul, and now finding himself captive to the Philistines, David cried out unto the Lord for His mercy and provision. David realized he faced a situation only God could resolve. Apart from the Lord he had no hope of survival. (We are not imprisoned by an enemy physically, but we face the continual assault of Satan. He wants to entrap us in sin, and hinder our efforts for the Lord. God alone can provide the strength and wisdom needed to overcome.)

**B. David's Peril (1b-2)** – [for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.](#) <sup>[2]</sup> [Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High](#). Although Saul sought David's life as well, the Philistines were the immediate threat. David recorded the peril he faced while being held captive by them. He was surrounded by a determined enemy, being greatly outnumbered by those who sought his life. They wanted to swallow him up, literally desiring the death of David. I think you will agree that David faced a perilous situation.

**C. David's Perception** (3-4) – *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.* <sup>[4]</sup> *In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.* It is evident that David faced a less than desirable situation. In fact, his very life was in danger. However, David refused to focus solely on the situation. He had learned over the years that God was faithful. He had experienced the mighty hand of God in the past and David chose to trust in the Lord at this moment as well. Although he feared for his life, he determined to trust in the Lord. David knew that as long as God was on his side, there was no need to fear men.

- We need to possess the same attitude and outlook. We have been promised that God will provide for us. Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. If God be for us, who can be against us? We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us!

**II. A Position of Humiliation** (5-9) – Being held captive by the Philistines, David found himself in a humiliating position. Consider:

**A. The Deceit of the Enemy** (5) – *Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil.* His enemies were relentless in their attacks. Daily they sought to twist David's words for their gain, seeking to discredit his integrity. Every thought they had toward David was directed toward his demise. He was surrounded by those who sought to destroy him at any cost. (Our enemy does not fight fair. He loves to use lies and deceit in an attempt to defeat us.)

**B. The Determination of the Enemy** (6) – *They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.* David knew he faced a concerted effort by many of the Philistines. Using deceit as a cover, they worked behind the scenes to seek any means of accusation against David. They were determined to defeat David, and even take his life.

- I certainly don't want to offer any undeserved applause to our enemy, but we must understand his power and determination to defeat every believer and congregation possible. He has worked against the plan of God and the people of God since the beginning. His desire to defeat and destroy lives is unrelenting. We face a very determined adversary, and we must be wise to his tactics if we expect to overcome.

**C. The Despair in the Encounter** (7-8) – *Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God.* <sup>[8]</sup> *Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?* Here David revealed the despair of his soul. He questioned if the enemy would be allowed to prevail. Would God allow them to defeat David, with no intervention from Him or consequence for

their actions? He cried out unto the Lord to cast down the enemy who had risen against him. David knew God had ordained his steps, ordering the path he had walked. David pleaded with God to put his tears in a bottle, presumably for a testimony against those who sought his harm. David knew and believed that God was aware of the pain and difficulty he endured.

- I do not think David was angry at God or in any way accusing the Lord of forsaking him, but he cried out in his desperation. In essence, David questioned how long the Lord would allow him to suffer before intervening on his behalf. We know God is aware of our needs and more than able to provide; yet at times we question why the Lord has delayed moving in our situation. These are basic, human reactions to adversity and pain.

**D. The Defeat of the Enemy** (9) – *When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.* Although David faced a desperate situation, he remained confident of the Lord's faithfulness. He had no way of knowing how the situation would unfold, but he rested knowing God was on his side. David was confident that God could defeat the enemy and bring absolute victory to him. When God intervened, the enemy was sure to fall.

- We too can find comfort in this truth. While the enemy is strong, he is no match for the Lord. We are already victorious through Christ and the triumph of His resurrection. There will be battles to fight along the way, but victory has already been secured in Christ.

**III. A Praise with Anticipation** (10-13) – In the closing verses, David's situation had not changed. He remained surrounded by the enemy, knowing they sought his life. In the midst of his despair, David chose to worship God in anticipation of the victory He would provide. Consider:

**A. Praise for the Lord** (10, 12) – *In God will I praise his word: in the LORD will I praise his word.* <sup>[12]</sup> *Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.* Although David was surrounded by the enemy, he praised the Lord for His eternal Word. David had read God's Word and he rested in the promises of God. He knew he served the Sovereign Creator, the Lord of all. God had made promises unto David through His Word and David was compelled to praise Him.

- We all face seasons of doubt and discouragement. There are times when our faith is weak and we feel defeated. Even then, God is good and He is worthy of our praise. His promises are not contingent upon our faithfulness, nor are the subject to the whims of the world or the attack of the enemy. We can rest in the faithfulness of God and His ability to care for us.

**B. Peace from the Lord** (11) – *In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.* This is the second time David uttered these words. Again, it doesn't appear that his situation had improved at this time, but he chose to trust in the Lord. David possessed an abiding peace from the Lord and determined to believe God in spite of circumstances.

- Those in Christ are secure in His mighty hand. The enemy may come against us, causing fear and uncertainty in our lives, but we have nothing to fear. If our trust is in God, there is no higher authority. We must learn to rest in His care for us, being at peace even in the storm.

**C. Provision from the Lord** (13) – *For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?* If one is not careful, this may appear to be a question of doubt, but in fact, it is just the opposite. David is not questioning God's faithfulness, he is rejoicing in it. David knew God had delivered his soul from death, and if God was able to do that, then He was surely able to keep his feet from falling. David knew his life was in the hand of God, and the Lord would provide all he needed.

- Isn't that a comforting thought? When we pause to consider what Christ has secured for us, we can rest in His care for our lives. He has already defeated every enemy we could possibly face. He conquered sin, death, and hell. He paid our sin debt as He bled and died on the cross. One who loved that much, securing our salvation, and conquering every enemy, will surely keep up in this life. Our lives are not lived by chance, nor are they at the mercy of the enemy. We are kept by the Sovereign power of the risen Lord.

**Conclusion:** David penned these words during a difficult season in life. He revealed the concerns of his heart, but realized God was bigger than any problem he faced. We face many difficulties in life, but our Lord remains faithful. In our times of despair, we must look to Him for strength and victory. He is able to provide for every need. If you are burdened today, come to Christ for the provision you need. If you are unsaved, look to Him in repentance and faith unto salvation!